



Airport © ABB

Airports and other facilities require efficient and reliable building automation and HVAC systems.

How Supplier Participation Can Drive the Growth of BACnet's Global Community

An Interview with BACnet International Board Member, Paul Bartunek

Paul Bartunek, Vice President Commercial Sales & Marketing, ABB Motion US, recently joined the board of BACnet International. An accomplished business development professional, Paul has extensive experience in HVAC, energy, power systems, sales, and applications engineering. In this Q&A with the BACnet International Journal, he explains why it is important for supplier company executives to become involved on a broader basis than contributing resources to BACnet's technical work.

What does your role cover within ABB?

My responsibilities cover everything related to commercial HVAC from a variable frequency drive (VFD) perspective. That includes channel management, applications engineering, working with OEMs and driving the commercial strategy. Drives are a very significant business within ABB Motion and my overall mandate is to help create energy efficient solutions for our customers.

Why did you decide to get involved with BACnet International?

In late 2018 I was asked by BACnet International President and Managing Director Andy McMillan to attend a meeting of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). Then in January 2019 I was elected to join the BACnet International board, which was also a first for ABB. All ABB employees have a certain responsibility to take on additional roles that support and benefit our respective communities. So, when this opportunity was offered to me, I didn't hesitate to embrace it.

My own involvement with BACnet had been fairly limited. However, our application engineering team, led by Tim Skell, is extremely active in the technical committees driving the ongoing development of the BACnet protocol as well as the BACnet International Marketing Committee. From this perspective, ABB has a long history of substantial contribution to BACnet, including integrating the protocol into our HVAC drive products.

What would you say are the advantages of the BACnet protocol?

Our customers, in particular, benefit greatly from utilizing equipment that's embedded with the BACnet protocol because it gives them choices. Traditionally, in the HVAC industry, companies have used proprietary solutions which were quite restrictive from a hardware perspective. But owing to BACnet's 'open' nature it works with all major control systems, allowing owners to specify a protocol that allows for any complying user's hardware to be selected. This generates healthy competition too.

What is the process of becoming a board member?

I was nominated by one of my peers in the industry. After a telephone interview I was sent an in-depth application form which required a resumé and information about my history, experience and philosophy. Following a review by the other nine board members I was invited to join the board.



Data center © ABB

Data centers are very energy-intensive as they need to run 24 hours a day. Efficient drive and motor packages can help reduce energy costs.

What do you hope to bring to the BACnet International organization as a board member?

I have broad experience in channel management and demand creation, which is somewhat different to that of the other board members. We already have the ABB application engineering team that brings enormous technical domain expertise, so my contribution is more of a business management and entrepreneurial nature, which I think has an important part to play.

How important do you think it is for suppliers like ABB to become actively involved in promoting BACnet?

I think it's critically important. BACnet's success, which is vital for the industry, depends on technical experts donating their time and knowledge. And because of its open nature, anyone that meets the standards and specifications associated with the protocol, can participate. It is critical for manufacturers such as ABB who are utilizing these open protocols to give their customers the power of choice that isn't locked

into proprietary firmware or protocols. This offers a tremendous advantage to both manufacturers and customers.

How do you plan to get other suppliers involved?

Part of what we're doing with BACnet is to promote the protocol across the globe. For instance, I'm working closely with regional ABB executives responsible for India to investigate the prospect of developing the BACnet community in India. So more than me trying to influence other manufacturers, I'm starting by trying to influence other ABB people across the globe to embrace and promote the protocol.

What can suppliers do to promote BACnet?

From an R&D perspective they need to make sure that they understand the technical aspects of the protocol. In other words, they need to test their equipment to the requirements of the BACnet certification program to make sure it complies with the operational specifications of the standard.

What role can community organizations, such as BIG-EU and BACnet International, play?

I think we all have a responsibility to work on a global basis with the ASHRAE student chapters within the large learning institutions, to make sure graduates have a thorough understanding of the importance of the protocol and its operational benefits. Probably the biggest thing community organizations can do is to participate in education via seminars and training sessions.

Manufacturers that are BACnet community members can, with their specific domain experts, also contribute in educating the community on the benefits and operational importance of the protocol. Everything in a building – from lighting and security systems to HVAC equipment – touches BACnet in some way. So, it's equally important for contractors involved in construction and building infrastructure to have a thorough operational understanding of BACnet and its technical application.

What are your hopes for the emerging community organizations in China/Asia and India?

My hopes and aspirations are to expand opportunities for customers in emerging markets by introducing and sharing these technologies. With reliable and efficient HVAC systems, buildings across the world can become more pleasant places to work and live in. One of the biggest selling points for drives is their energy efficiency, and we want to promote that message globally.

What are your views on the importance of global product specifications?

In terms of BACnet's significance in the global economy, many OEM customers will ultimately

end up being connected to BACnet in some way. With this open protocol, regardless of where a system is designed or built, we can create a global consistency. BACnet certification assures our customers that we care about our products and have gone through the time and effort to prove that our BACnet implementation is not only correct, but robust and interoperable.

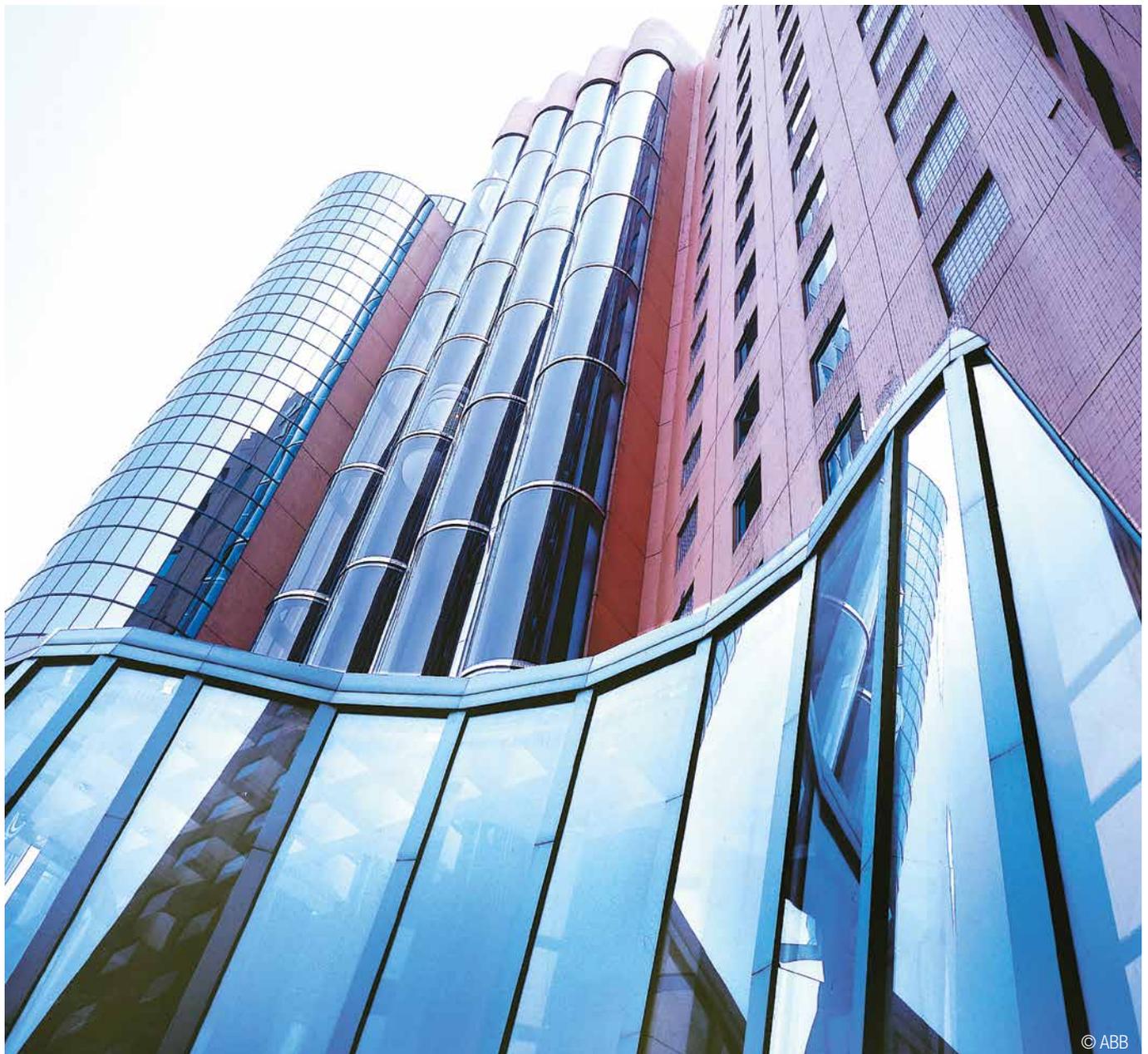


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How do you see the future evolution of BACnet?

In general, we will most likely see a normal evolution. The technology is mature and expanding and I see the usage of BACnet being integrated with more and more components. In fact, at some point it may well extend to residential developments too.



BACnet-certified drives help to control the ventilation of buildings to match actual needs.